Toast followed toast, with songs between; and as the third tumbler was being drained, the ladies retired to their bed-room and supper. The ladies of the party had all to sleep in one room; the gentlemen – those of them who did not sleep under the table – in another. The outer door was locked, so that no one of the party should leave till next day. Among the gentlemen the hilarity became more and more boisterous; and by the time that four of their number had sunk under the table, the worthy minister slipped out of the room and found his way to the gentlemen’s bed-room. As the waiter who supplied the gentlemen with hot water passed the ladies’ bed-room, he gave them an account of how things went. His first report was, “Fower doon, the minister awa’ tae bed, and twa wi’ their heeds on the teeble.” “Hark ye,” says Vellyan’s wife to the waiter, “and if ye’ll notice, whin Vellyan fa’s under the teeble, tae lowse his neckcloth and the buttons o’ his waistcoat and shirt neck, I’se pay you weel for your trouble.” “Nonsense,” said Niglay’s wife; “my Goodman never buttons the neck o’ his shirt; aad he aye pits his twa hands atween his thraple and his neckcloth whin I tie it tae him afore he gangs tae a drinkan’. “That’s a good plan,” says Vellyan’s wife; “I never thought on’t afore.” The waiter’s next report was, “Sax under the teeble, twa o’ them spuan’ like mad; five still sittan’, aen o’ them lyin’ back wi’ a terrible hiccough; and the l’ave drinkan’ fu’ he’rty. Hid deus a bothy geud tae see them.” When the waiter next came out, he said, “Only t’ree ap; a’ the rest doon – aen o’them tryan’ tae swaer, an’ like tae wirry on every oath. I’m bidden no’ tae come wi’ mair water.” Scarcely had the waiter left the room, when one of the three that still kept their seats fell under the table. “There goes,” says Wessness; “and here goes to you, Vellyan.” Vellyan and he were now the only two who remained sitting. “And here’s to you wi’ a’ me he’r’t,” said Vellyan. “We’re the jolly boys – are we no’? Our freen’s under the teeble cinno’ match us. The maist o’ them could only stand the ten commandments; only twa o’ them could stand the twal’ apostles; bit I’ll be bound you and I shall stand the De’il’s dizzan; and maybe twa or three tae the geud.” “How many is this?” says
Wessness. “This,” says his companion, “is only the fourteenth, – and here it goes. Ower wi’ yours! An’ it’s me thought we’ll tak’ the next aen dry. We wad need that noo, after drinkan’ sae muckle haet water i’ the punch. I aye thought punch a vero geud thing, if we could only get it without the water. For Lord’s sake! gang no’ under the teeble wi’ the rest. I cinno’ bear tae sit me leen whin a’ the l’ave’s under the teeble. It’s awfo’ langersom’, and mind’s me sae muckle o’ daeth. Man, I never tell’t it tae anither soul; – bit I got a awfu’ fleg. I thoug’ht a while I should never get the better o’ t a’ me life.” “Well, Vellyan,” said Wessness, “it would not be canny that fleggid you.” “Canny,” responded Vellyan; “’po’ me sa!’ it was naether canny or cosy. I tell you, if I ever think on’t, whin I’m no’ weel beamed wi’ geud punch, it mak’s the cauld sweat come oot aboot me. I never wad spaek o’t till efter I had drunken’ twall’ tumblers. I tell you, they wur fower o’ us drinkan’ i’ the hoose o’ Trumblan’; – jolly chiel’s wur we a’; ye wad no’ f’und oor marrows for drinkan’ i’ a’ the brakan’ isles o’ Orkney. It wus Tammy Scart’, Jock Craigie, Ollie Inkster, and ‘I, quo’ the dog.’ And I can sweetly swaer, fower better fellows never sat doon tae a drinkan’ teeble. We never wet a tumbler; we kent there wus nee mak’-a-deu drinkers i’ the company – sae we jeust drank oot o’ the punch bowl. And whin sheu geed aboot wi’ the second fill, Inkster teuk her first, and drank her dry at a braeth. I never saw aen o’ the ferry-lupper loons that could deu the like. ‘Weel boys,’ says I, ‘if this is tae be the wey, we need no’ fash the sugar an’ haet water, let’s jeust tak’ the crater’ as Geud meed it.’ And if we did no’ drink then, we did naethin’. We drank till Scart’, Craigie an’ Inkster fell deid drunk under the teeble. I wus sittan’, jeust as I’m sittan’ noo, wi’ the snuff-box i’ me left hand, and me right ready tae tak’ the ither wauch. I wus jeust liftin’ the bowl tae me heid, whin I heard like the snortin’ o’ a horse under the teeble. Thinks I, it’s some o’ me drunk mates snoran’, yet it soonded strange in the see-lance o’ the nicht. The soond grew mair lood an’ awfu’; an’ thinks I, they’re maybe smoo’ran’. Sae I luckid under the teeble; and there I saw a great black man knedgan’ Inkster’s t’rapple. ‘Ye muckle ill-mennered bitch!’ says I, ‘is that a wey tae come whiman’ among gentlemen? Aff hands! an’ get up an’ shaw yoursel’ like a man, or, by the heid o’ St Man’s, ye’s’ get a sark o’ sair been’s.’ Up he raise an’ gae a launch – sae awfu’, that the soond o’d wad ha’e pitten ony sober man oot o’ his wits; – bit
tanks for’d I wus no’ fairly sober then. And says he, ‘How dare you speak to me? Do you know who I am?’ – He spak’ high English; it’s a’ the tongue they ken war’ he cam’ fae. ‘I naither ken or care wha ye are. I only ken ye’re an ill-mennered scoondrel, tae come here in sic’ a fashion. And be ye man or deevil, ye’s’ aither tak’ a freendly bowl wi’ me, an’ tell me wha ye are, or else bae me faith ye’s’ get a thrashin’ that s’all crush every been’ in your body.’ ‘You’re a bold fellow,’ says he. ‘We’ll try the drinking first.’ And doon he sat i’ Inkster’s chair. I filled the bowl; and says I, before I drank tae him, ‘Here’s to you be wha ye may, and I wish tae you –

‘Less English, and mair grace;
Mair menners, and a bonnier face.’

For his face wus awfu’ to luck on, as I saw it by the light o’ the fire; I hope I’ll never see the like again. He rakid oot a lang black hand, teuk the bowl an’ drank her dry. ‘Well done,’ says I. The proverb says, ‘He needs a lang speun wha sups wi’ the De’il;’ and troth wha drinks wi’ him needs a deep bowl. I tell you his face was as black as the back o’ that chimney, while his e’en lowed like flames o’ white fire. Bit I hed no fear; for I aye fand fear deus little geud i’ a time o’ need. And says I, ‘Ye ill-mennered breut, deu ye see what black marks ye’re left on the bowl wi’ your seuty thumbs and mooth. You’re an ill-bred breut, tae come in the company o’ gentlemen wi’ unwashed face and hands.’

He luckid as door as a nort’ wind sky. And says he, ‘Take off your waistcoat. If ye mean fight, let’s at it. Take off your waistcoast!’ ‘I’m d------ if I do,’ says I. ‘I think maesel’ man eneuch tae fecht you wi’ me waistcoat on.’ For I kent his tricks brawly. Ye may think it freutery, bit me auld mither aye keepid twa’rt’ree laev’s o’ a psalm beuk shued i’ the back linin’ o’ me waistcoat; and he wanted me waistcoat aff, that he might ha’e me i’ his poo’r. ‘Well,’ says he, ‘if ye won’t take off your waistcoat, ye shall soon lie as dead as your three friends are.’ ‘Mae freends,’ says I, ‘are no’ deid, they’re only drunk in a gentlemanly wey.’ ‘Look there,’ says he, and lifted up Inkster, and threw the deid man on me knee. And sure eneuch he wus deid and cauld, as if his braeth been geen for fower and twinty hoors. ‘Ye’re not believing
they’re deid,’ quo’ he; ‘seeing’s believing!’ And he clappid his twa hands taegether, till they stra’k fire whin they met; whin, – as seur as I see you afore me this meen-it, – I saw, staun’ quackan’ ahint him, the ghosts o’ me t’ree comrades, whas’ bodies were lyan’ cauld an’ deid under the teeble. I was never sae fairly te’en aback i’ me life, tae see the t’ree deid men’s ghaists a’ gloweran’ sae doolfu’ like at me; an’ I thought they were a’ sayan’, ‘O Vellyan, Vellyan! can ye no’ help us, Vellyan?’ I tried tae say the neem’ o’ Geud; bit the De’il hed sic’ poob’r i’ the room, I could no’ get the word oot.” “Confound your ghost story!” said Wessness; “let’s be he’rt noo, and leave it till anither time.” “Bide you,” said Vellyan, “the best o’d’s only comin’; and resumed his tale. “Weel I thocht hid wus best tae tak’ the De’il on the geud side, if I wus tae w’ather him. For ye see hid wus the mester Deevil himsel’ that wus sittan’ i’ the room. So I spak’ him fair. Says I tae him, ‘Weel mister, ye’re a clever chiel’ nee doobt; bit onybody could ding oot the saul o’ a drunk man, and no’ gae him muckle trouble aither. Bit if ye’ll pit back every aen o’ yin ghaists intae his ain body again, I’ll ca’ you the cleverest chiel’ I ever saw. And if ye do that, I’ll tak’ aff me waistcoat, as sure as me neem’s Vellyan.’ ‘It’s a bargain,’ says he. And he grippid Craigie’s ghost i’ ae hand an’ his body i’ the ither, an’ stappid the saul i’ the body, jeust as I wad stap a grise i’ a pock. Next he grippid Scart’, an’ stappid him in; an’ than Ink-ster. I wus no’ idle while he wus pittan’ the deid men tae life. I tore ap the linin’ o’ me waistcoat wi’ the nail o’ me thumb; teuk ane o’ the laev’s o’ the psalm beuk; turned the keg o’ gin that wus stan’in’ on the teeble on her side, opened the bung-hole, an’ stappid the laef i’ the keg. I deu no’ think I wad ha’e hed time tae deu a’ this, hed no’ the black gentleman meed a mistake, and tried tae pit Craigie’s ghost i’ Scart’s body. Bit De’il a’ bit wad they fit ane anither, though the De’il himsel’ was tryan’ tae fit them. At last he finished his job, and turnan’ tae me, says he, ‘Now Vellyan, off wi’ your waistcoat. ‘I promised tae tak’ off me waistcoat, bit I did no’ say when,’ says I. ‘Ye ill-descended an’ waur bred muckle black whalp, get oot o’ this hoose, i’ Geud’s neem’! And wi’ that I threw the gin keg, wi’ a’ me poo’r, right on his heid. It seurly lighted on aen o’ his horns, for it greed i’ skows on his skull. And he sprang ap the lum like a mad cat, cryan’, ‘O! Vellyan, gin ever I get thee, th’u’s boil i’ brunt-steen’!’ Faith he forgot his English, i’ his hurry. But O the
fearfu' noise he meed'! Ye wad ha'e thought that Burgar Rost wus roaran' i' the lum. By this time mae three com-rades wur as sober as sillocks, and fresh as well water. I tell'd them what wey I chaeted the De'il; an' Inkster sweur I wus the cleverest chield he ever heard o'. 'For,' quo' he, 'th'u're no' only w'athered, but th'u're bapteezed the De'il i' gin, saesonied wi' a psalm beuk. And bae me faith he deud no' like the saesonin'. Noo that he's been bapteezed i' Geud's neem', think ye will he mend? I saw the laef o' the psalm beuk stickan' on his nose as he geed up through the lum.' 'No, bae me faith,' says Scart', 'that cannot be, for I saw it on the point o' his tail. An' hoo coud th'u see it on his nose, whin his back wur tae thee? You're wrang for ance, Inkster.' Says Inkster, 'That's wisely said; bit deu ye no' think that I can see through and through the De'il, jeust as through a piece o' window gless.' I deu no' think bit what they wad ha'e foucht aboot it, hed it no been for Craigie, peur Deevil! He wus lyan' greetan' like a bairn; and I doobt he never got the better o'd.